



RYAN LODGE MINE

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation • Division of Spill Prevention and Response

Site Description

The Ryan Lode Mine occupies approximately 1,123 acres of private, state, and federal lands on Ester Dome near Ester, Alaska. Various mining operators have explored and mined the site since 1912. Over time, residential development has occurred within the mining district and specifically around the Ryan Lode property.

In February 1999, Kinross Gold Corporation (parent company of the Fort Knox mine) and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation entered into a prospective purchaser agreement. The agreement relieved Kinross of certain liabilities for past contamination that occurred prior to their purchase of the Ryan Lode property. In return, Kinross agreed to assess and clean up existing contamination in accordance with current department regulations and policies even if they chose not to mine the property. The Department is working with a multi-agency mine permit team (federal and state) to integrate the site cleanup activities with the permit's base-line studies and possible mine operations.

Threats and Contaminants

A preliminary assessment of the property identified several general areas of concern: abandoned hazardous substances and waste; petroleum stained soil; and possible exposure pathways of contaminants to soil and groundwater from historical spills or operational practices.

Public Health and Environmental Concerns

Local residents have expressed concerns about possible contamination of their water wells, past operational practices and spills/discharges, and potential nuisances from the proposed mining operation.

Response Actions

In March 1999, the department approved an outline of a comprehensive site characterization workplan. Individual workplans for specific elements of the site characterization process will be approved as they are developed in conjunction with mine permit baseline studies.

In April 1999, the Department participated in a public meeting sponsored by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, the federal Bureau of Land Management, and Kinross. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the public of the proposed mine operation and to identify the public's concerns.

In June 1999, the Department approved a management plan to segregate potential hazardous waste from stockpiled soil and a heap leach pad. The hazardous material was segregated, contained, and shipped off site for disposal. The Department is coordinating with Environmental Protection Agency regarding regulatory interpretations.

Current Status

- Additional site characterization work is scheduled for the summer of 2000.